

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BUDAPE 00100 121933Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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P 121030Z JAN 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7689

S E C R E T BUDAPEST 0100

STADIS//////////

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR HU US  
SUBJECT: THE CROWN JEWELS

REF: 75 BUDAPEST 3098

1. AT LUNCH ON JANUARY 11 AMBASSADOR BARTHA, DIRECTOR OF FONOFF DEPARTMENT V, SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO POSE A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION. IF I WERE IN HIS POSITION, WHAT WOULD I PROPOSE THAT THE GOH DO ABOUT THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN? SHOULD BE GOH AGGRESSIVELY PUSH THE ISSUE, PUBLICLY AS WELL AS PRIVATELY, OR NOT? I RESPONDED THAT IF I WERE IN HIS POSITION I WOULD PLAY IT VERY LOW KEY, JUST AS THE GOH HAS BEEN DOING THROUGH PRIVATE AND DIPLOMATIC CONVERSATIONS FOR THE PAST YEAR OR MORE. IN MY VIEW IT WOULD BE SELF-DEFEATING FOR THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT TO START A POPULAR HUE AND CRY IN HUNGARY AND ABROAD CALLING FOR RETURN OF THE CROWN JEWELS. FOR ONE THING, THE U.S., A SUPER-POWER, COULD NOT BE PUT IN THE PUBLIC POSITION OF HAVING IT LOOK AS THOUGH IT HAD BEEN PRESSURED INTO RETURNING THE CROWN BY A SMALL COUNTRY AND A COMMUNIST ONE AT THAT. IF THE U.S. WERE TO BE PUT IN THAT POSITION CERTAINLY ANY DECISION TO RETURN THE CROWN WOULD BE DELAYED.

2. HOW LONG SHOULD WE WAIT, BARTHA INQUIRED. I SAID THAT THE U.S. CONSIDERED THE CROWN TO BE THE PROPERTY  
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OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE AND THAT THERE WAS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT; THE CROWN WOULD BE RETURNED. BUT WHEN THAT TIME WOULD COME IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO SAY. PRESUMABLY, AT SOME POINT IN TIME THE NEW ADMINISTRATION WOULD WISH TO REVIEW THE MATTER BUT GIVEN THE MYRIAD MAJOR ISSUES CONFRONTING THE NEW PRESIDENT AND HIS ADVISORS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHEN SUCH A

REVIEW MIGHT TAKE PLACE. I URGED PATIENCE. THE GOH SHOULD REFRAIN FROM MAKING PUBLIC ISSUE OF THE RETURN OF THE CROWN IN THE INTEREST OF EVENTUALLY ACHIEVING ITS RETURN AND CONTINUING THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZING BILATERAL RELATIONS.

3. BARTH CONCEDED THAT REASON BEHIND GOH'S PRESENT TACTICS WAS ITS RECOGNITION THAT MAKING RETURN OF THE CROWN A PUBLIC ISSUE HAD ITS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE ASPECTS. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT RETURN OF THE CROWN IS DISCUSSED AT ALMOST EVERY HIGH LEVEL CABINET AND PARTY CONFAB. THE PROS AND CONS OF HUNGARY'S PURSUING OTHER ALTERNATIVES ARE OFTENTIMES DEBATED. THERE IS VERY HIGH LEVEL INTEREST IN HAVING THE CROWN RETURNED AND SOMETIMES IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO PEOPLE IN HIGH PLACES THAT THE POLICY THAT IS NOW BEING PURSUED WILL EVENTUALLY BE SUCCESSFUL. I SAID THAT THE U.S. IS AWARE OF THIS "HIGH LEVEL INTEREST" AND IN TIME THE CROWN JEWELS WOULD BE RETURNED. I COULD NOT, HOWEVER, PIN DOWN A PRECISE TIME FRAME.

4. COMMENT: CONVERSATION WITH BARTTA IS REFLECTIVE OF THE RISING IMPATIENCE APPARENTLY NOW PREVALENT IN HIGH OFFICIAL HUNGARIAN CIRCLES ON THE ISSUE OF THE CROWN. THIS IMPATIENCE SEEMS QUITE LIKELY TO INCREASE IN 1977.  
MUDD

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CULTURAL PROPERTY, CROWN OF ST STEPHEN, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 12-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Previous Handling Restrictions:** STADIS  
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**To:** STATE  
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